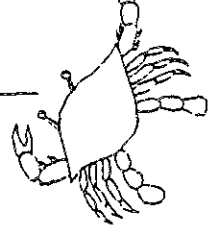

Get a Grip on Our Future



BEAUFORT COUNTY

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Executive Summary

Draft - October, 1996

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Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan is an important document for the County, since it contains the guidance for the development of the County for the next 10 to 20 years. As such, the plan is designed to present recommendations and policies that the County should adopt and implement during that period. The overall purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to enable the government officials and citizens to anticipate and constructively deal with change and growth in the community and to encourage the development of a safe, healthy, orderly and distinctive living environment.

This executive summary of the Plan provides an overview of the recommended policies and implementation actions for the various elements of the Plan. These elements are:

- Future Land Use
- Natural Resources and Water Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Affordable Housing
- Parks, Recreation and Open Space
- Community Facilities
- Transportation and
- The Economy

The complete Comprehensive Plan document is composed of several volumes including:

1. The core document which contains all of the technical background for each element;
2. Appendix A which contains the record of results of the surveys;
3. Appendix B and Appendix C which contain the record of the Public Participation which formed the basis of the Plan;
4. Appendix D which contains a complete Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan; and
5. Appendix E which contains an expanded Economic Diversification Plan.

This plan is a "living" document and as such should be reviewed and updated on a regular five year basis. However, the plan should also be reviewed on a yearly basis, and the implementation plan defined and updated for the upcoming year.

Vision Statement

Beaufort County must preserve, protect and enhance the . . .

- quality of its waterways,
- natural environment,
- historic resources,
- fisheries,
- rural areas,
- agricultural land (where possible),
- existing communities,
- population diversity (age and race),
- and unique scale and character

. . . that foster a sense of community, make the County a desirable place to live, work and call home and a valuable tourist destination. The County must also develop efficient public transportation and roadway systems to protect its attractiveness in the future.

The County must expand and diversify its economy to:

- provide a broad employment base of "higher than minimum wage" jobs; and
- provide those jobs in close proximity to housing that is affordable to residents of the County.

This economic expansion and diversification should be viewed in the context of a regional economy. It should not occur at the expense of the natural and/or cultural environment which define the quality of life of the County.

The County must also expand its recreational opportunities both for local residents of all ages, and as an attraction for continued tourism and second home development.

The County must find a balance between both the private property rights and the rights of the neighbors and the community while preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural environment and quality of life of the community. In order to achieve this goal, the County must work toward increasing accessibility to the planning process for all citizens of the County and to carry out and respect the wishes of the people.

Future Land Use Plan

1. Growth Areas

Designating Growth Areas are critical to accomplishing the goals of preserving the rural character of the county and accommodating the continuing growth anticipated for the region. There are four primary criteria considered for designating the primary Growth Areas for Beaufort County:

- 1) Existing or anticipated access to public sewer and water;
- 2) Existing or anticipated transportation capacity to accommodate growth;
- 3) Relatively few environmental development constraints; and,
- 4) Access to public services such as schools, libraries, fire protection, police and emergency services.

There are five designated Growth Areas in the county:

- 1) the area surrounding the Town of Bluffton;
- 2) the area along both sides of Highway 170 south of Sun City Hilton Head;
- 3) the southern portion of Port Royal Island;
- 4) a more northern portion of Port Royal Island including the present Laurel Bay development and the existing Beaufort County Business Park; and
- 5) Lady's Island Village.

A. Residential Development within Growth Areas

Density:

- up to 8 units per acre with performance standards.
- density bonus option of 12 units per acre for affordable housing projects.

Development Standards

- mix of densities in neighborhoods -- single family / multi family.
- integrated bike and pedestrian trails to link schools, shopping centers, village centers, government buildings, services, libraries and parks.
- roads should be interconnected in a grid or modified grid pattern -- cul-de-sac streets and large, gated developments will be discouraged.
- variations in lot sizes and frontage dimensions allow a range of house sizes and costs along with a variety in the streetscape.
- set aside common green space or pay a fee in lieu.
- maintain existing mature trees on site and provide street tree plantings.

Required

- traffic calming.
- sewer and water hook-up to existing lines or laying dry lines.
- limit locations of gated communities.

B. Neighborhood Commercial Within Growth Areas

Uses

- small scale retail such as convenience stores, dry cleaning-outlets, and delis.
- bed-and-breakfast establishments.
- small scale offices; and
- multi-use complexes limited to 20,000 square foot articulated building.

Density and Siting Considerations

- neighborhood commercial uses should be sited along major residential streets.
- no direct access along state highways or designated evacuation routes.
- commercial uses should be sited in nodes; however, no more than one consecutive block should be exclusively commercial.
- neighborhood commercial uses should not exceed 10,000 sq. ft. in floor area.
- multi-use complexes should be limited to 20,000 sq.ft. of building floor area.
- complexes should be designed with buildings of residential size, scale and character, and may be separate or joined.

Restricted

- no drive-through restaurants.
- no direct access to state highways or designated evacuation routes.
- facade setback same as residential.
- parking to side and rear.
- outdoor storage (unless of plants related to a nursery or commercial greenhouse operation) or trailer storage.

C. Village Commercial Uses in the Growth Areas

Density and Siting Standards

- located in designated nodes within the growth areas.
- located in close proximity to surrounding residential neighborhoods with easy vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian access.

- building heights should not exceed 2 storeys.

Prohibited

- Commercial uses of over 45,000 sq.ft. in floor area or large traffic generators.

D. Regional Commercial Uses within the Growth Areas

Regional commercial nodes are designated in three of the growth areas:

1. at the intersection of Hwy. 21 and 170 on Port Royal Island,
2. at McGarvey's Corner, and
3. in the existing commercial development along highway 278 leading to Hilton Head.

Preferred Uses

- those up to 80,000 sq.ft. of retail per store;
- regional malls;
- multi-use complexes of retail and office space recommended; and
- larger hotels and office buildings.

E. Research and Development Business Parks within the Growth Areas.

Locations within the growth areas:

1. in the existing park in the northern growth area of Port Royal Island;
2. in the Town of Bluffton Growth Area within the Regional Commercial designation along Highway 278; and
3. in the western Bluffton Township Growth Area.

Preferred uses

- non-polluting, clean industries;
- high-tech industries; and
- low- or no-waste producing industries.

2. Community Preservation

Future development in these communities should occur under the following conditions:

- the density of new development should be in keeping with that of the existing

- community;
- new development should infill around existing homes with similar density and character;
- greenway buffers should be maintained between existing communities within growth areas and new communities that may develop around them;
- the character of the existing streets should be maintained or enhanced;
- sewer hook-ups are required before subdividing existing lots in a Community Preservation area;
- new homes should meet the same building lines as those existing, along with similar heights and dimensions;
- new homes should have similar or complementary architecture;
- commercial nodes should be maintained at existing commercial uses and expanded at the discretion of the neighborhood plan; and
- new commercial uses should be maintained at a size and scale consistent with the surrounding neighborhood.

3. Rural Residential

Requirements:

- An overall density of 1 unit per 3 acres.
- Require clustering of residential uses to a minimum lot size of 1 acre.
- Require a minimum of 50% dedicated open space.

Family Exemption

In order to address the issues of heirs property and "family compounds" which are common in these areas, families will be allowed to:

- subdivide their property to a density of 1 unit per 3 acres for immediate family members without going through an extensive subdivision approval process.
- each existing home site parcel may add up to two accessory units to a density of no more than 1 unit per acre, given additional approved perc sites.

Rural Business Option

In order to provide greater flexibility in the rural areas for home businesses to develop, the rural residential zone will have an option for a rural business. Examples of rural business might include a retail or wholesale nursery, kayak building, specialty food production, or recording studio.

The rural business will have the following features and constraints:

- the parcel that the business is located on must be owner-occupied;
- the business can have a maximum accessory structure size of 15,000 sq.ft.;
- the accessory structure must be compatible in size and design with rural outbuildings in the rest of the county;
- limits are placed on the amount of outdoor storage allowed for the business;
- the number of employees allowed will be limited to minimize the traffic impact;
- the home and business must be located on a minimum lot size of 5 acres.

4. Rural Conservation

Certain areas of the County's rural landscape are particularly sensitive to development because:

- they are areas sensitive to development due to a proliferation of wetlands;
- have poor soils for septic system capacity;
- are adjacent to waterways that have been designated outstanding resource waters by the state; and/or
- have other sensitive natural resources.

Requirements

- density 1 unit per 5 acres.
- cluster discretionary.
- minimize clearing of existing vegetation on site.

Rural Business Option

- applicable in the Rural Conservation zone only on the southern portion of St. Helena Island designated Rural Conservation.

Family Exemption

In order to address the issues of heirs property and "family compounds" which are common in these areas, families will be allowed to:

- subdivide their property to a density of 1 unit per 5 acres (or one unit per three acres in the southern portion of St. Helena Island) for immediate family members without going through an extensive subdivision approval process.
- each existing home site parcel may add up to two accessory units to a density of no more than 1 unit per acre, given suitable soils and additional approved perc. sites.

5. Resource Conservation

- primarily those areas which are barrier islands and islands within the major waterways of the County, and therefore difficult to access.
- also pose a higher potential for water quality impacts from septic systems.

Requirements

- limited to one unit per ten acres
- single family residential, parks and recreation and government uses.

6. Research and Development Districts

Outside the Growth Areas in the existing industrially-zoned areas of Sheldon Township.

- northern location has access to sewer at Yemassee, and has good access to Interstate 95.
- southern location is at the LOBECO Products plant, west of Dale.

Two locations for industrial incubators:

- one to the west of the LOBECO Products plant at Dale; and,
- the second at Corner Community on St. Helena Island.

The preferred uses for all of these areas are non-polluting, clean industries; high-tech industries; and low- or no-waste producing industries. New industries should pose no danger to groundwater or surface water quality.

7. Cultural Protection Overlay

The culture, landscape and way of life of St. Helena Island is a treasure of national significance. As one of the last remaining locations of Gullah culture, language and customs, the island requires an additional level of development standards to protect this important resource.

Residential Development

- new closed-gated communities on St. Helena should be discouraged. Closed gated-communities are antithetical to the cultural heritage of St. Helena Island.

- historic points of public access to the water and other locations on the island should be identified and protected by outright purchase or donation to the County, or by purchase or donation of easement to a local land trust.

Public Market District

Uses:

- neighborhood commercial, residential and compatible manufacturing.
- size, scale and type to serve the community but not generate substantial additional traffic.
- limit building size and scale to fit in with the existing historic structures.

Natural Resources

Vision Goals

- Maintain the pristine waterways in the region;
- Manage finfish and shellfish resources;
- Protect existing open space;
- Conserve existing stands of mature trees;
- Identify and protect areas of ecological significance;
- Minimize the visual impacts of timber harvesting activities;
- Protect the quality and quantity of its groundwater resources; and
- Protect ORW status of Colleton, May and Okatie rivers.

POLICY 1. Maintain and improve the quality of surface waters.

POLICY 1.1. To maintain the high quality of surface and ground-waters in the region, Beaufort County will develop strategies to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

Actions:

1. Develop a nonpoint source education program for County homeowners.
2. Maintain a minimum 100-foot buffer along all existing waterways.
3. Develop a Countywide, integrated stormwater management strategy. which limits the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff to pre-development levels.
4. Reduce septic system densities to the soil absorption capacity level.
5. Direct new development to growth areas serviced by sewage treatment.
6. Develop zero degradation plan for managing new development impacts.
7. Develop performance standards for variances down to 50 ft. buffer.

POLICY 1.2. To maintain the high quality of surface and ground-waters in the region, Beaufort County will protect tidal and nontidal wetlands from development impacts.

Actions:

- i. Develop a Countywide set of basemaps, indicating the extent of wetlands.

2. Subtract wetlands from development density calculations in the DSO.
3. Provide opportunities for wetland mitigation.
4. Require a minimum buffer of 100-feet from tidal and nontidal wetlands.
5. Specify monetary sanctions for non-compliance with wetlands protection measures.
6. Prohibit the use of existing wetlands for stormwater cleansing and management.
7. As part of the development application process, require existing wetlands to be identified and mapped.

POLICY 1.3. *To maintain the high quality of surface and ground-waters in the region, Beaufort County will develop an integrated stormwater management program.*

Actions:

1. Adopt BMP's for the cleansing and retention of stormwater on site.
2. Develop countywide standards which limit the quality and quantity of stormwater runoff to pre-development levels.
3. Develop standards which limit the amount of impervious surfaces.
4. Develop standards to increase the area for on-site filtration.
5. Define sediment and erosion standards for construction and post-construction phases.

POLICY 1.4. *Protect the Outstanding Resource Waters of Beaufort County.*

Actions:

1. Implement a 1000-foot Critical Area designation for all ORWs in Beaufort County.
2. Limit development within the ORW Critical Area to residential uses on a minimum site of 5 acres.
3. Restrict the clearing of existing vegetation to 20,000 square feet on residential lots within the ORW Critical Area.
4. Prohibit golf courses within the ORW Critical Area.

POLICY 2: *Maintain the quality of County ground-water resources.*

Actions:

1. Develop special management standards for areas of significant ground-water recharge.
2. Develop septic system density standards for areas outside of sewer service

areas.

3. Encourage the use of alternative waste disposal systems which may serve cluster developments and multiple households.
4. Require Integrated Pest Management Practices (IPMPs) for all golf courses.

POLICY 3: To protect the environmental, visual, surface and ground-water quality of the existing resources, the County will protect existing open space.

Actions:

1. Develop a comprehensive Greenway and Open Space Conservation and Acquisition Plan.
2. Coordinate local open space acquisition efforts with local land trusts and conservation organizations.
3. Provide tax incentives for property owners to place properties, or portions of properties under conservation easement.
4. Delineate and adopt Growth Area boundaries.
5. Require minimum parkland set-asides for new developments.
6. Revise the definition of open space to exclude golf courses.

POLICY 4: To stem the continuing loss of significant trees and tree stands, the County will implement more effective tree protection standards.

Actions:

1. Develop an inventory of existing live oaks and mixed hardwood communities.
2. Establish standards for the protection of significant trees on development sites.
3. Strengthen and enforce existing regulations to hold both the landowner and the contractor liable for noncompliance.
4. Increase fines for noncompliance with tree preservation standards.

POLICY 5: In recognizing that there exist certain areas which provide habitat for rare , threatened or endangered plant and animal species, the County will protect these areas from negative impacts.

Actions:

1. Develop and maintain a Resource Atlas of rare and/or endangered resource concentrations in the County Planning Department.
2. Working with State and private conservation organizations, develop a voluntary program for landowners to assist in managing these resource(s).
3. Identify Priority Areas of ecological significance and target those areas for open space acquisition through voluntary donation, conservation easement, or

public purchase.

POLICY 6: To reduce the amount of nonpoint source pollution washing off-site and minimize visual degradation, the County will manage timber harvesting activities.

Actions:

1. Require the issuance of permits for timber harvesting activities.
2. Require a minimum 25-foot forested buffer along road frontages adjacent to timber harvesting activities.
3. Require soil and erosion control management plans before issuing permits for timber harvesting activities.
4. Require the use of forest Best Management Practices (BMPs) for all timber harvesting activities.

Cultural Resources

Vision Goals:

- Identify and protect the county's existing archaeological and above-ground historic resources.
- Preserve the unique Gullah culture on Beaufort County's Sea Islands.
- Expand efforts to involve the public in historic preservation.

POLICY 1: Identify and inventory the County's existing above ground historic resources.

Actions:

1. Develop a countywide inventory of cultural resources.

POLICY 2: Identify the County's pre-historic and historic archaeological sites.

Actions:

1. Continue to monitor and review all archaeological reports on development
2. Investigate methods of financing archaeological surveys, including private.

POLICY 3: Develop a strong Beaufort County Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Actions:

1. The Historic Preservation Review Board should form a working committee to advise the Planning Department on revisions to the Ordinance.
2. Expand the register of historic designations by including historic sites and structures of local historic significance.
3. Define what resources and actions are under review board jurisdiction.
4. Establish penalties for non-compliance and establish more specific criteria for review board decisions.
5. Revise the administrative procedures that are to be followed by the applicant and the Historical Review Board.
6. Establish policies and penalties for demolition by neglect.
7. Develop qualifications for review board membership.
8. Develop standards to address historic landscapes.

POLICY 4: Protect Beaufort County's diverse pre-historic and historic archaeological sites.

Actions:

1. Enforce the Archaeological and Historic Impact Assessment Ordinance.
2. Become a signatory to any Memorandum of Agreement for archaeological sites.

POLICY 5: Expand efforts to involve the public in historic preservation.

Actions:

1. Work with local preservation organizations to raise public awareness.
2. Establish speaker bureaus to give presentations to organizations, civic clubs and schools.
3. Work with schools to establish programs on historic preservation.
4. Work with local media to publicize historic preservation.

POLICY 6: Develop and promote the mechanisms for public and private partnerships to preserve and protect historic properties.

Actions:

1. Encourage organizations and individuals to work together to establish covenants and easements on historic properties.
2. Work with County Council and municipal governments to pass legislation freezing property tax assessments at pre-rehabilitation levels.
3. Promote and encourage the use of federal, state and private organization grants.
4. Encourage the use of federal tax incentives for income producing historic properties.
5. Establish a low interest loan pool to stimulate private investment in historic low income neighborhoods and deteriorated properties.
6. Establish a grant-in-aid program to assist with stabilization, emergency repairs and repairs to low-income housing.

POLICY 7: Preserve the unique Gullah culture on Beaufort County's Sea Islands.

Actions:

1. Maintain the rural character by preserving traditional land uses patterns and density of the Sea Islands.
2. Preserve the built environment associated with this unique Sea Island culture.

POLICY 8: Maintain the historic character of the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District.

Actions:

1. Work with the S.C. DOT to ensure that they are aware of the communities' concerns regarding the replacement of the Woods Memorial Bridge.
2. Explore alternative routes to Lady's Island and beyond that would bypass the City of Beaufort.
3. Encourage the use of Alternative U.S. 21 for all traffic going to the islands.

POLICY 9: Include the protection of historic resources in emergency management planning.

Actions:

1. Work with the County Emergency Management Department and Building Codes to develop a plan for protecting historic resources during and after a natural disaster.
2. Establish a procedure with the S.C. Department of Archives and History that will expedite emergency financial and technical assistance available to property owners.
3. Design and distribute a brochure outlining emergency management procedures post disaster stabilization procedures for historic structures.
4. Use the information in the Beaufort County Survey in planning for a natural disaster.

POLICY 10: Protect the Sheldon Church ruins and create safer road conditions accessing the site.

Action:

1. Work with the S.C. DOT and Beaufort County to reduce the speed limit and allowed tonnage on Sheldon Church Road.

Affordable Housing

Vision Goals:

- Create a public / private / community consensus and alliance to develop affordable housing;
- Leverage resources for the private market to develop and maintain affordable housing;
- Encourage a variety of housing types to accommodate the full variety of income, age, and cultural groups in the community;
- Foster affordable housing opportunities convenient to job centers; and
- Be sensitive to concerns relating to aesthetics, open space, and the County's natural resources.

Existing Dimension of Affordable Housing issues in Beaufort

1. Very low-, low-, and moderate-income households can afford to pay \$52,000, \$83,000 and \$125,000 for a house, in a county where the average mobile home, multi-family home and single-family home costs \$34,000, \$109,000 and \$155,000 respectively.
2. Over one-half of the county's 3,100 homeowners earning less than \$20,000 pay more than 30 percent on shelter.
3. There are at least 200 substandard housing units in the county.
4. The Housing Authority has a waiting list of 500 for its 800 subsidized units.
5. Housing directors of Beaufort military bases report waiting lists of approximately 700 for its 1,600 units. Time on the waiting list can exceed a year.

Policy Issues

1. Lack of affordable housing can have impact on local retail/service employment.
2. Lack of affordable housing near workplace increases traffic generated by long-distance commuters.
3. Lack of affordable housing puts military bases at greater risk.
4. The problem is getting worse as property values continue to rise in an affluent county such as Beaufort, especially in northern Beaufort County.
5. Provisions for affordable housing may raise concerns regarding increased development, and increased County costs (e.g., schools). "Not in my backyard" sentiments may also arise.

POLICY 1: Create public/private/community consensus

Actions:

1. Institute public/private Task Force.
2. Establish affordable housing program; either broaden mandate of Housing Authority or Economic Development Department, or establish quasi-public agency.

POLICY 2: Leverage resources.

Actions:

1. Lobby for public funding.
2. Utilize public land to create affordable, mixed income housing--particularly towards meeting the needs of military personnel.
3. Create public/private partnerships (e.g., with financial institutions to satisfy Community Reinvestment Act, and with major employers such as Hilton Head resorts to build, buy or rent housing for employees).
4. Where water and sewer are available, amend zoning to allow a 50% density bonus for affordable housing.

POLICY 3: Encourage a variety of housing types, to accommodate full variety of income, age and cultural groups.

Actions:

1. Provide flexible zoning to accommodate family compounds.
2. Allow the development of residential accessory units.

POLICY 4: Foster affordable housing opportunities near jobs centers.

Actions:

1. Provide density bonus in connection with low/moderate income set-aside; 100% in growth areas; 50% in neighborhood preservation areas. Require restricted covenants.
2. Offer expedited review; pre-target sites (e.g., Affordable Housing Action Plan).
3. Target financing and other incentive for the private market to create and maintain affordable housing in designated areas that might include areas close to employment centers, site along major public transportation routes, areas containing adequate infrastructure, and a combination of the above.

POLICY 5: Be sensitive to aesthetics, open space and natural resources.

Actions:

1. Consider affordable housing implications when drafting design standards.
2. Avoid over-concentrations of affordable housing

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

Vision Goals:

- Assess current deficiencies in existing parkland and recreation facilities.
- Locate, design and develop additional parks to meet current and future needs.
- Make the best use of existing parks and recreation facilities.
- Provide adequate staff to support existing recreation centers.
- Develop new programs through PALS in response to public needs.
- Use the County's land development regulations to preserve and protect open space.
- Develop greenways as a means of preserving valuable land.
- Maintain parks and recreation facilities.
- Use traditional and innovative financing to fund parks and recreation services.

POLICY 1: *Develop additional County, community, and neighborhood parks to meet the current and future demand and to serve different geographic areas.*

Actions:

1. Develop new County parks (200+ acres each) to meet existing need (see table below).
2. Develop new community and neighborhood parks to meet existing need.

Planning Area	Community Parks (average 25 acres each)		Neighborhood Parks (average 10 acres each)	
	Needed Now	Additional Needs by 2020	Needed Now	Additional Needs by 2020
Northern Beaufort	1	0	0	0
Port Royal Island	9	1	0	0
Lady's Island	2	2	0	2
St. Helena	2	2	0	2
Southern Beaufort				
Bluffton	2	12	2	8
Township				
Hilton Head *	1	1	5	5

* extracted from Hilton Head Island park and recreation plan

POLICY 2: *Make the best and most efficient use of existing park and recreation facilities.*

Actions:

1. Work closely with providers (school district, MWR, churches, etc.) to maximize facility use.
2. Make improvements to existing parks and recreation facilities.
3. Study existing public boat ramps to identify necessary repairs and desired additional improvements.

POLICY 3: *Provide adequate staff and support to help the recreation centers grow into thriving, viable community activity centers.*

Actions:

1. Provide professional leadership at each center.
2. Maintain a minimum staff level at each center.
3. Study consolidation of some centers.

POLICY 4: *Provide recreation facilities on publicly accessible lands to operate needed programs.*

Actions:

1. Provide additional facilities to meet existing needs (see Table 2).

Facility	Need d Now	Additional Needs by 2020	Facility	Need d Now	Additional Needs by 2020
Baseball fields	3	18	Tennis courts	12	31
Little League/softball fields	7	17	Swimming pools	4	3
Basketball courts	19	38	Bike/walk/jog paths (miles)	3	22
Soccer/football fields	6	18	Boat ramps	0	24
Outdoor volleyball courts	25	27	Picnic tables	415	372

Table 2:

POLICY 5: *The County will work with other recreation providers to promote the use of existing programs and to make the best use of existing community resources.*

Actions:

1. Work with school district, Low Country Tech., USCB, YMCA, social service agencies, and others through the Council of Recreation Providers.
2. Work with officials in the ACE Basin to establish a nature center in Beaufort County.

POLICY 6: *Develop new programs through PALS only in response to public needs or if program fees can offset all costs.*

Actions:

1. Develop programs for children after school (target population).
2. Develop swimming classes (high priority as pools are built).
3. Study transportation options (major impediment to participation).

POLICY 7: *Use the County's land development regulations to preserve and protect streams, water bodies, tidal and nontidal wetlands, and sensitive wildlife areas.*

Actions:

1. Review and modify the River Protection Overlay District.
2. Incorporate flexible development regulations into the county zoning and subdivision ordinances.

POLICY 8: *Encourage other agencies, organizations, and landowners to help preserve open space land in the County.*

Actions:

1. Support the Beaufort County Open Land Trust.
2. Prepare a waterway corridor protection handbook.

POLICY 9: *Develop a Comprehensive Greenway and Open Space Conservation and Acquisition Plan for the County as a means of preserving valuable land and allowing residents to enjoy the County's natural beauty.*

Actions:

1. Encourage the use of greenway planning principles where possible to enhance

- the preservation and enjoyment of Beaufort County's natural assets.
2. Encourage the preservation, restoration, enhancement, and promotion of the county's historic landmarks and areas.
3. Explore the feasibility of establishing a Beaufort County Greenways Commission to develop a coordinated system of greenways throughout the county.

POLICY 10: Recognize Parks and Leisure Services as a strong component of the high quality of life in Beaufort County.

Actions:

1. Develop a comprehensive public relations and communications program.
2. Develop efficient methods of communication and document distribution.
3. Write regular parks and recreation columns for the *Island Packet* and *Beaufort Gazette*.

POLICY 11: Maintain parks and recreation facilities at an acceptable level as efficiently as possible.

Actions:

1. Develop and use park maintenance standards.
2. Implement an objective capital projects program and capital equipment replacement program.

POLICY 12: Work with other groups and organizations to maintain parks and recreation facilities as appropriate.

Actions:

1. Work with the school district to maintain fields and other recreation facilities at school sites.
2. Combine resources with other recreation providers, such as the school district, to jointly purchase expensive, labor saving equipment needed for high quality field maintenance and used on a seasonal basis.
3. Require a developer or homeowners' association to be responsible for maintenance and improvements of recreation facilities within gated communities.

POLICY 13: Use traditional and innovative financing techniques to fund parks and leisure services equitably throughout the County.

Actions:

1. Fund multi year, objective capital improvements and capital equipment replacement programs.
2. Aggressively seek state and federal grants to support parks and leisure services.
3. Continue to use bond financing to support major capital improvements and land acquisition.
4. Develop a gift catalogue with separate financial accounting to encourage residents to support public parks and recreation.

POLICY 14: Revise existing Parks Department structure and procedures to increase efficiency and to make the best use of community resources in a coordinated leisure service delivery system.

Actions:

1. Continue to strengthen the department through reorganization to streamline decision making and increase accountability and responsibility of department staff.
2. Upgrade the department's computer capabilities in scheduling, program registration, coordination of center activities, and communication between centers and the central office.
3. Strengthen the Council of Recreation Providers by establishing regular meetings, agendas, and activities which include the county, municipalities, schools, semipublic (e.g., YMCA), private, and commercial recreation providers.
4. Whenever possible, contract with other capable entities to meet the need for recreation facilities and services.

POLICY 15: Establish planning as an important, continuous activity in guiding the Department

Actions:

1. Examine the status of plan implementation annually, stressing goals, measures of achievement, and direction for the future.
2. Conduct a major update to the plan every 5-6 years.
3. Present the department's goals, accomplishments, and needs to County Council—preferably in a workshop session—at least once a year.
4. Hold an annual recreation retreat.

POLICY 16: Recognize the importance of attracting and maintaining high-quality staff.

Actions:

1. Continue to hold staff meetings at regular intervals to increase staff awareness of all department activities.
2. The director should periodically visit each community center and other remote sites to provide support and guidance to staff.
3. Consider establishing regular meetings for Center Directors.
4. Develop a strong, organized volunteer recruitment and recognition program.
5. Encourage staff to attend appropriate seminars, short courses, and other forms of employee education and development.

Community Facilities

Vision Goals:

- Provide sewer service to designated Growth Areas.
- Identify and protect potential effluent spray sites throughout the County.
- Identify alternative and limited capacity wastewater systems to serve designated areas outside of Growth Areas.
- Improve the permitting process for septic systems.
- Provide public water to the Dale community.
- Eliminate any existing duplication of solid waste services and associated costs.
- Provide cost effective and efficient solid waste collection, recycling and disposal County-wide.
- Encourage community residential and business participation in the recycling program.
- Develop intergovernmental agreements and form a Solid Waste District Board.
- Provide an equivalent degree of fire protection to citizens and their property throughout the County.
- Provide the best immediate patient care and medical transportation available.
- Update the General Government Facilities Plan to coordinate with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.
- Encourage the siting of new school facilities within the Growth Areas.
- Make services and information accessible to all County residents.
- Provide the same level of law enforcement protection to all County citizens.
- Develop a regional evacuation plan and written agreement for cooperation with surrounding counties.

POLICY 1: *Expansion and location of new regional sewage collection and transmission facilities will be limited to designated County growth areas as identified on the Future Land Use map.*

Actions:

1. Prohibit the future expansion of regional sewer service outside the designated growth areas.
2. Develop a process by which the County and the BJWSA will provide limited onsite wastewater systems or small appropriate technology to service existing development and infill within Community Preservation areas outside the Growth Areas.
3. Develop a plan with BJWSA, for the installation of public sewers within the growth areas, for developed areas which are above the designated density or where public health or environmental risks exist.

4. Develop a program to offset the financial impacts of sewer connection for persons with low to moderate incomes.
5. Encourage all existing development over one unit per acre and currently without sewer within the growth area to utilize public sewer as available.
6. Require all new development over one unit per acre and currently without sewer within the growth area to utilize public sewer as available.
7. Allow on-site septic systems within the growth areas, provided that the designated density is based on the soil capacity and upon approval from SCDHEC that there is no public health or environmental risk.
8. Revise the Development Standards Ordinance to require dry sewer lines to be installed in all new subdivisions and developments in growth areas where public sewer is not yet, or can not be made available immediately as determined by the BJWSA.

POLICY 2: Identify and protect potential spray sites throughout the County for future use and/or purchase by the BJWSA. Identify the sites on the Community Facilities Map.

Actions:

1. Adopt criteria with the BJWSA for the determination of potential spray sites.
2. Encourage tertiary treatment of effluent throughout the County.

POLICY 3: The BJWSA should identify alternative and limited capacity wastewater systems to serve areas that are outside the growth areas which cannot be served by septic tanks but may have public health or environmental problems.

Actions:

1. Investigate new and alternative technology for wastewater treatment disposal (BJWSA).
2. Identify the rural areas of the County which need appropriate small systems.

POLICY 4: Improve the permitting process and standards for septic tanks. Currently, South Carolina has the least stringent standards for septic tank approval in the southeast. This has contributed to septic tanks not sited correctly, placed on inappropriate soils and constructed improperly.

Actions:

1. Assist SCDHEC in the development and provision of educational programs on the proper maintenance of septic tanks for the public.
2. Review the current permitting procedures and develop ways to improve the

- process as a joint effort between Beaufort County and SCDHEC.
3. Develop, or assist SCDHEC in the development of a monitoring program for those areas of the County with a high percentage of failing septic systems.
 4. Revise the current policy regarding minimum lot sizes for subdivision. To improve the longevity and efficiency of septic systems, increase the minimum lot size and require a replacement site for every approved disposal site.

POLICY 5: Provide a source of public water to the residents in the Dale area due to poor water quality in northern Beaufort County and the salting of existing wells.

Actions:

1. Develop a plan to provide public water service to the Dale area.

POLICY 6: Provide adequate fire protection in the rural areas of the County where public water is not available.

Actions:

1. Working with the Fire Districts, develop a plan that address fire protection, specifically the use of a dry hydrant system, in the rural areas outside the growth areas.
2. Implement a regional water system within Beaufort County by consolidating or jointly using existing systems to eventually reduce ISO fire ratings and fire insurance costs.

POLICY 7: Within the County Growth Areas, all development with a density greater than one unit per acre will be required to utilize public water. On-site wells will be allowed only below the designated density and only when there is no public health or environmental risk.

Actions:

1. Providing public water in the growth area will be made cost effective by concentrating the new development in these areas.
2. Revise the Development Standards Ordinance to require dry lines to be installed in all new subdivisions and developments inside the growth area where public water is not yet available, when density is over one unit per acre.
3. Adopt a policy for County review of requests for on-site water within a Growth Area.
4. Develop public water supplies in Community Preservation areas outside of the designated growth areas, due to problem wells, polluted ground water or saline intrusion.

POLICY 8: *Eliminate any existing duplication of solid waste services and associated costs. Develop and adopt a plan to restructure the solid waste districts into eight districts, to tailor services and generate revenue based on the population in each area.*

Actions:

1. Re-design solid waste facilities to coordinate the actual usage of convenience drop-off centers with appropriate design.

POLICY 9: *Increase recycling participation rates by citizens, businesses and industry within the County.*

Actions:

1. Develop an educational program for County citizens on the benefits of recycling and the necessity of meeting State-wide goals for waste stream reduction.
2. Develop a program to re-structure and expand existing recycling programs to encourage participation by businesses and industry and be cost-effective to the County. Business and commercial activities generate the highest quality and quantity of recoverable commodities.

POLICY 10: *Develop intergovernmental agreements with municipalities and form a Solid Waste District Board to administer County solid waste districts.*

Actions:

1. Create a Solid Waste District Board to administer the solid waste districts.

POLICY 11: *Provide an equivalent degree of fire protection to citizens and their property throughout the County. Lower Insurance Services Organization (ISO) ratings over time to secure lower insurance rates for citizens and businesses.*

Actions:

1. Encourage development in fire districts that are capable of providing adequate fire protection services, at appropriate costs, to an increased number of structures.
2. Develop a plan working with the Fire Districts that address fire protection, specifically the use of a dry hydrant system, in the rural areas outside the growth areas to help lower ISO ratings.

POLICY 12: Provide the best immediate patient care and medical transportation available. Maintain separate fire protection and EMS services, working together and continuing to serve different functions.

Actions:

1. Achieve a five minute response time County-wide.
2. Develop appropriate curbside marking of house numbers as a simple means to increase safety and lower response times.
3. Revise the Development Standards Ordinance, where appropriate to ensure new development is accessible by emergency equipment.

POLICY 13: Update the General Government Facilities Plan to coordinate with the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan and to provide adequate community services for the needs of the County's growing population over time.

Actions:

1. Establish a task force of the appropriate County staff members to investigate and determine strategies for the short-term and long-term provision of adequate public facilities and services.
2. Investigate the need for an Adequate Community Facilities Ordinance as a growth management strategy to ensure that the provision of community services keeps pace with development.
3. To more efficiently serve the citizens south of the Broad River, the County will need to expand its satellite office in the Southern Growth Area to house extensions of the Human Service, Public Safety and Development Division offices of the County.
4. Construct a new office facility for the Development Division, keeping in mind the County's goal of "one-stop shopping" for citizens seeking permit approvals.

POLICY 14: Encourage the optimum siting and construction of new school facilities inside growth areas.

Actions:

1. Develop effective coordination between the Beaufort County School Board and the Beaufort County Planning Board/Planning Department.
2. Review of proposed school sites should include consideration of County goals and policies and location in relationship to identified growth areas of the County, in addition to the Department of Education policies.

POLICY 15: Make services and information accessible to all County residents within a reasonable distance of their home, workplace, or through extension services.

Actions:

1. Construct /expand library facilities within growth areas and maximize accessibility in non-growth areas.
2. Develop siting criteria for the placement of library branches.
3. Develop the Library system materials collection to meet State goals including computerized access to information.

POLICY 16: Encourage and support the construction/expansion of cultural facilities within growth areas and maximize accessibility in non-growth areas.

POLICY 17: To provide the same level of law enforcement protection to all citizens of Beaufort County.

Actions:

1. Conduct a patrol manpower allocation and deployment study to prescribe the level of staffing needed to respond to the needs of citizens in a timely manner. The objective is to deploy manpower to match the geographic incidence of crime and demands of non-crime services.
2. Include any increase in officers over the next five years within the Capital Improvements Program.
3. Plan and construct a new substation in the Okatie area.

POLICY 18: Develop a regional evacuation plan and written agreement for cooperation with surrounding counties. Protect the major evacuation corridors throughout the County. Continue coordination endeavors with local agencies and organizations to ensure maximum efficiency in evacuations.

Actions:

1. Protect, upgrade and expand the capacities of the major evacuation routes.
2. Limit the number and type of access points on to evacuation corridors.
3. Require emergency evacuation plans for significant developments, nursing and retirement homes to be submitted and approved by the County EMD.
4. Identify new shelter locations approved by the Red Cross.

Economic Diversification

Vision Goals:

- Preserve competitive advantage in current core clusters (e.g. tourism and services)
- Attract target industries to designated Growth Areas in the County
- Improve and/or promote available sites in Growth Areas
- Establish an Economic Development Corporation
- Strengthen existing cooperation with neighboring counties and state agencies

POLICY 1: While Preserving Competitive Advantage in Current Core Clusters (e.g., Tourism and Services), Focus on Building Labor, Infrastructure, and Marketing Capacity to Attract Target Industries to Specifically Designated Growth Areas in the County.

Actions:

1. Target identified "strong sectors" (from Targeted Business Analysis, and given market factors).
 - a. Wholesale Trade [*Durable Goods* (e.g. lumber and other construction materials; computer software and peripherals; sporting and recreational goods/ supplies)]
 - b. Transportation, Communication, Utilities [*Motor Freight/ Warehousing* (e.g. courier services, storage)]
 - c. Services [*Health Services* (e.g. nursing facilities); Social Services (e.g. residential care)]
 - d. Manufacturing [*Printing/ Publishing; Rubber/ Plastics*]
2. Maintain flexibility to "re-focus" targeting for emerging opportunities.
3. Build on ongoing initiatives to promote focused labor force training.
 - a. Promote expansion of USC-Beaufort campus in Okatie area.
 - b. Continue to support TCL and CEC; identify funds to expand existing training opportunities.
 - c. Implement incubator concept (Corner Community).
 - d. Promote/ extend support for both the School District's "School to Work" program and ACCLAIM project.
4. Implement expanded visitation program.

5. Create *Financing* and *Export Assistance* groups to facilitate business expansion.
 - a. Develop and implement an "Incubator without Walls" program.
6. Plan and implement One-Stop Business Center.
7. Implement initiatives to refine and expand scope of this training
 - a. Form a "JOBS" group (under Labor Force Subcommittee).
8. Establish Internet home page.
9. Focus other retention efforts on tourism and service sectors to ensure their participation in, and benefits from, the diversification process.
 - a. Expand initiatives to link "tourism destination" marketing with business recruitment efforts.
 - b. Develop/ update area-specific marketing material.
 - c. Focus on "under promoted" heritage tourism and eco-tourism.
10. With increasing capacity and market demand, evaluate additional proactive initiatives.
 - a. Spec facilities (commercial space, machine shop, film studio).
 - b. Additional incubators; expansion of ACCLAIM.
 - c. Begin specific trade missions nationwide/ overseas.
 - d. Research park development--USC-Beaufort campus.

POLICY 2: As desired by citizens, and based on adequacy of available acreage to address expected growth, improve and/or promote available sites in targeted growth areas.

Actions:

1. Market infrastructure and amenities of existing and planned future business clusters.
2. With the goal of limiting "sprawl", as defined by strip malls and "big-box" retail, promote retail development based on marketplace realities and work to enhance productivity of existing retail.

POLICY 3: Establish an Economic Development Corporation.

Actions:

1. Preserve/ build on existing public and private organizations (see Exhibit I).

- a. Continue and expand fund-raising initiatives by the existing Economic Development Partnership.
 - b. Continue planning for implementation of regular quarterly business recruitment events in the County.
2. Establish separate subcommittees committed to labor force training, as well as business recruitment and retention efforts (see Exhibit 1).
3. Establish benchmarks, develop definitions, and craft corporation policy statements.
4. Coordinate sequential implementation of action items (see Exhibit 2).

POLICY 4: Strengthen existing cooperation with neighboring counties and State agencies.

Actions:

1. Expand effective impact of the 5-County Regional Economic Development Alliance.
2. Develop regional marketing strategies; cooperative limits on incentives and "clawback" provisions.

Transportation

Vision Goals:

- Implement a Transportation Planning Program.
- Create a Transportation Planning Position.
- Coordinate with a Regional Planning Process.
- Ensure Coordination of County Priorities/Initiatives with S.C. DOT.
- Promote Mixed Land Use.
- Ensure Adjacent County Coordination.
- Provide Annual Training of Transportation Planning staff.
- Promote Scenic Roads.
- Promote Bikeways/Trails.
- Commit to Mass Transportation.
- Emergency Evacuation Coordination.
- Adopt Traffic Calming Techniques.
- Monitor Peak Period Traffic Situation.
- Preserve Corridor Traffic Capacity.
- Develop Corridor/Sub-Area Plans.
- Perform Traffic Impact Studies.

POLICY 1. Adopt New Roadway Classification and System Map

POLICY 2. Adopt and Implement a Comprehensive Future Roadway Plan

Actions:

1. Evaluate 2020 Scenarios Using TMODEL2
 - a. Scenario A: Lowcountry COG Beaufort County 2020 Land Use Projection
 - b. Scenario B: Accelerated Lowcountry COG (Beaufort County) 2020 Land Use Projection
 - c. Scenario C: Re-arranged Scenario B 2020 Land Use with Upgraded Roadway System
2. Recommend Future Roadway Plan
3. Perform Additional Sub-Area Studies
 - a. Study A: Re-alignment options of S.C. 802/U.S. 21 on Lady's Island
 - b. Study B: Re-alignment/Traffic Calming Options for U.S. 21 on St. Helena Island at Martin Luther King Boulevard
 - c. Study C: Streetscape/Traffic Calming Options on S.C. 46 in Bluffton
 - d. Study D: Reduce Impact of Strip Commercial Development on U.S. north

- POLICY 3. Adopt a Policy for Bikeways/Trails for Walking*
- POLICY 4. Adopt a Policy in Support of Public Transportation - LRTA*
- POLICY 5. Encourage Waterborne Transportation as an Alternative Mode of Future Travel Policy*
- POLICY 6. Adopt a Policy to Monitor Federal Programs: ISTEA, NHS, and Funding Sources*
- POLICY 7. Commit to Traffic Calming Program for Roadway Projects*
- POLICY 8. Commit to Coordinating Land Use Planning Decisions with Access Decisions*
- POLICY 9. Promote Policy of Regional Cooperation Regarding Comprehensive Planning*
- POLICY 10. Create Coordinated Emergency Evacuation and Transportation Planning Policy*
- POLICY 11. Establish a County Transportation Planning Program Policy*

Actions:

1. Fund, Maintain, and Implement the Transportation Element of Comprehensive Plan.
2. Refine the County's Site Plan Review Process.
3. Actively Participate in Lowcountry COG Programs.
4. Commit to Funding and Maintaining TMODEL2 Travel Demand Modeling Program.
5. Commit to Annual Technical Training for County Staff.
6. Retain Consultants for Complex Technical Support.
7. Maintain Close S.C. DOT Liaison for Funding Road Improvements.
8. Request Reasonable Modifications to S.C. DOT Road Design Standards.
9. Promote Mixed Use Projects to Reduce Travel Demand on System.
10. Create BATS Advisory Highway Corridor Task Force to Protect Corridor. Capacity, Aesthetics, and Investment.
11. Promote Creation of Scenic Roads Program.
12. Promote Walking Trail/Bikeway System.
13. Commit to Funding Advance Purchase of Right of Way for Roadway. Corridors/Interchanges.
14. Develop/Adopt Conceptual Corridor Plans.
15. Develop/Adopt Sub-area Plans for Lady's Island, St. Helena Island, and Bluffton.

16. Add Conceptual Corridor Plan Element to Overlay Districts.
17. Pursue Innovative Funding for Transportation Improvements.
18. Administer Traffic Impact Study Review Process.

POLICY 12. Initiate Administrative/Staff Actions

Action:

1. Establish County Transportation Planner Position
2. Develop Annual Traffic Monitoring Program
3. Promote and Sustain Interdepartmental Coordination
4. Promote and Sustain Adjacent County Coordination

POLICY 13. Adopt Capital Expenditure Program



	Class I Roads
	Parcel Boundaries
	Stream Lines and Tidal Creek Boundaries
	Growth Areas
	Undevelopable areas (Marsh/Tidal Wetlands)
	Rural Residential
	Rural Conservation
	Resource Conservation
	Community Preservation
	Public Market District
	General Commercial
	Village Center
	Research and Development
	Existing Planned Unit Development
	Existing Park
	Military Property And County Airports
	Incubator Development

Scale 1:225000

BEAUFORT COUNTY

Future Landuse

